

Books.

"En hoexkens ende boexkens."

Among books which, if not entirely suitable for children, contain much that will delight them, I may note the following:—"Fairy and Folk Tales," edited by W. Yeats (Camelot Series, 1s.); Folk-lore Stories (Scotch, Irish, German, Oriental), 4 vols. (Messrs. Gibbins, 6s.); Keightley's "Fairy Mythology" (Messrs. Bell, 5s.); Fantômes Bretons (Messrs. Dillet, Paris, 3s. 6d.) To begin with the last; Brittany, like Egypt, is the home of marvels, and the contes, legendes, and nouvelles of this book are as strange and as beautiful as the legend of the Bells of Ys, now endowed with a new immortality by M. Renan. I would always impress on people that it is not necessary to give over to a child's keeping the books bought for children, for very often an author mingles children's stories with others which are fit neither for children nor for any one else. But books which contain one or two stories which may be retold and worked up, are a good addition to a home library. In this Breton collection the first story, "Le pousseur de la dourdu," is one of the many sad sea legends, and "Les poires d'or," is a delightful fairy tale. Some persons will not approve of the ecclesiastical portion of the story, "The Man without a Head"; but in retelling the tale you may omit the saint, and hold on with childish gravity to the head "qui branlait déjà et allait glisser, glisser, glisser, de dessus ses épaules." The stories are connected by the artistic links of sonnets; and part of one I quote.

O Crux Ave.

Que j'aime à déposer à tes pieds ma tristesse,
A verser sur ton front mes soupirs et mes pleurs,
A répandre en ton sein ma peine et ma détresse
A te confier mes malheurs.

Soudain mon désespoir se change en allégresse
J'oublie à tes genoux, mes regrets, mes douleurs,
Et je dis en baisant tes mains dans mon ivresse,
Jésus c'est pour moi que tu meurs.

Et quand j'ai vu s'enfuir ma dernière espérance
Sur sa croix, à mon tour, je place ma souffrance
Et devant moi s'ouvre le Ciel.

Mr. Yeats' book is worth its shilling and more, if it were only for the story of the "Little Bird" (the prose version of Longfellow's monk Felix,

which is an Irish legend), the "Giant's Stairs," and the "Priest's Soul." The book is a collection, and many of the tales may be found in Lady Wilde's larger volume, and in other storehouses of Celtic romance; but it is a startlingly good collection, and the Leprachauns, the Banshees, and the Witches are well represented. Furious fun and grim horrors are side by side; and the reader of folk-tales is at first delighted and then hopelessly confused by finding in Celtic dress stories which he has seen in the wonder-books of other lands. The notes are good, and any one who wants to know what the actual cry of the Banshee is like, can find it here in crotchets and quavers.

It is hardly necessary to praise Keightley's "Fairy Mythology," but I would like to recommend it to any people who are hard up for fairy tales. Take your Keightley, open it anywhere, read five lines, add from your own experiences; mix up with a few topical allusions, and serve to your young audience—hot. The book is good for some six hundred applications or dishes.

The tastefully-bound volumes named "Folk-lore" and "Legend" contain much that is old and a good deal that is new. But the old stories, such as the "Two Bottles," "Fly Cantillon's Funeral," and the "Nurse's Adventure" are very well put, and the "Red Cap" and the "Goose Girl" may be new to many people. The Mouse tower is our old friend Bishop Hatto in a prose dress, and the story of "The Dancers" is from an Anglo-Saxon source, I believe. The Editor, who is not above making a mistake in his Latin to show us that he is mortal, conceals himself under a three-leaved initial. He might have given us better prefaces; but he has got his wares together from many bazaars (bazaars, he would say), and deserves to sell them. From "Monica" (a German leaflet, which comes out every fortnight, and is occasionally accompanied by a flower) I take the following prayer:—"Gott, Du bist der rechte Vater, Schöpfer, und Herr meiner Kinder, und hast sie als teure Pfänder mir anvertraut um sie zu Deiner Ehre, zu ihrigem ewigen Heile und zum Wohle ihrer Mitmenschen zu erziehen, Dir opfere ich sie auf, sie sind Dein. Segne O Herr, Deine geschöpfe, bewahre sie vor dem Bösen, heilige sie in der Wahrheit und Tugend, dass sie fromm und vollkommen vor Dir wandeln. Mich aber lass' nie vergessen dass meiner Kinder unsterblich sind, und dass ich durch die Erziehung und Bildung, die ich ihnen gebe, den grund zu ihrem Zustande in der Ewigkeit lege. Lass' mich auch tief die Rechenschaft zu Gemüte fassen, die ich einst über ihre Seelen werde zu geben haben; lass' nicht zu dass eine derselben durch meine Schuld und Nachlässigkeit verloren gehe, sondern hilf mir sie so zu erziehen dass ich einst von ihnen umgeben von Dir erscheinen und sagen könne Siehe, Vater, von denen die Du mir gegeben hast, habe ich keinen verloren. Amen."

A short poem from the same magazine I will give in the March number.
NEMO.

STORY BOOKS FOR CHILDREN.—Mrs. Molesworth's books are, perhaps, too well known to need recommendation. Yet I think some of the very best among them are less known than they deserve to be, being less

advertised than those published by Macmillan. Routledge is the publisher of "The Boys and I," "Hermy," and "Hoodie"—all special favourites in my family. The first and last, especially, my children are never tired of, and the youngest, who cannot read, or even understand them, yet is quite familiar with the names of author, books, and characters, which are literally household words. Lady Barker's books are also such as deserve a place in all children's libraries, bearing to be read over and over again, they are so original, and there is so much variety in them, and most of them being founded on fact, their charm is the more appreciated. "Boys" is published by Routledge; "White Rat, &c.," Macmillan; "Ribbon Stories," "Stories about Christmas in Four Quarters," Warne & Co.

FRENCH BOOKS FOR CHILDREN.—I think French story books suitable for English children are not very common. I can most strongly recommend those by Madame de Pressense (publishers: Hachette & Co., Charing Cross; Dulan & Co., Soho Square). They are perfectly unaffected, giving a bright, amusing picture of French domestic life and character, and are of a healthy, religious tone (Protestant). "Rosa" is suitable for children of eight to twelve, "La Maison Blanche" for somewhat older ones, and "Thérèse" is a sweet story for young girls. There are several others which I have not yet read. Mrs. Molesworth's "French Life in Letters" (Macmillan & Co.) is delightful, while for a first French reading book nothing can be better than "L'Aube du Jour" (the translation of "Peep of Day"), especially when the English original is already familiar. "A MOTHER IN INDIA."

I should like to recommend to interested readers of the article "From an Interleaved Prayer Book," in the December number of the *Parents' Review*, "Old Wells Reopened: A Manual of Devotion from Forgotten Sources," an admirable little volume edited by Dr. Marcus Dods, and published by Messrs. Hodder & Stoughton, London. F. A. W.



By the Way—

THE BIBLICAL VIEW OF HEREDITY.—In the November number of the *Parents' Review*, there was published a paper, "The Biblical View of Heredity," which seems to me to call for some reply. In the present state of our knowledge, no one will deny that heredity does produce certain tendencies of both body and mind. The question is, does it possess any such overwhelming power as Mr. Reade represents it to have? This point, put as it is put in his paper, is one which may exercise a vast influence on our practical work, and in the interests of those of our little ones who had the misfortune to be born of a line of vicious ancestors it is worthy of some careful examination.

At the very threshold of the Jewish war of extermination is placed a character which might appear to have been given this position for the express purpose of warning us off from any theory of immutable heredity. The first city captured by the Israelites was Jericho. The destruction of it was so complete, and the curse laid on it so scathing, that no room can be left for the supposition that the inhabitants were in the smallest degree less deserving of extermination, less sunk in sensuality, than those of other cities. In it was a woman who must have inherited all the ancestral sins as fully as any inhabitant of the land, whose mode of life, moreover, shows that she practised the abominations which abounded. She was a harlot, and what kind of person would be specially singled out for this designation in a city such as was Jericho may be left to the intelligence of the reader. She inherited and practised, then, the sins of her ancestors. Yet, not only was she spared; not only was she married to one of the children of Israel, so that she is enumerated among the ancestors of both David and Our Lord, but she is expressly quoted in the New Testament as one of the shining examples of the faith that saves.

But, it may be replied, her case may be regarded as an example (to use a scientific term) of a reversion to the original type of man before the fall of Adam. Her goodness (on Mr. Reade's hypothesis) was but a remembrance of his. Granted. But then what becomes of the "scientific" argument with regard to the children? How can we say, "If the rising generation had been spared *we may safely predict* that it would have exceeded the abominations of its fathers"? Can we predict that sinful parents must of necessity produce yet more sinful offspring? If so, then must the course of the world be one of ever downward tendency and ever increasing corruption. So hopeless a creed hardly is in conformity with Christian teaching. If Rahab, who had grown up amidst and practised the corruptions of Jericho could be saved, much more might the babes who had done neither.